

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DHA-01 ORM-01 SP-02 L-01 IO-06

PRS-01 H-01 PM-03 INR-05 EB-03 MC-01 IGA-01 /047 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3331

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 0836

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE TODMAN

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SHUM, UY

SUBJ: RECOMMENDING URGENT REVIEW OF US POLICY TOWARD URUGUAY

1. SUMMARY: U.S. PUBLIC CRITICISM AND ANNOUNCED SANCTION OF URUGUAY AS A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR HAS PLUNGED RELATIONS TO A NADIR UNPRECEDENTED IN THE PAST. CONTINUATION OF SUCH A POLICY CAN ONLY MAKE THIS SITUATION WORSE AND WILL NOT SERVE THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BETTERMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, A U.S. POLICY OF FIRMNESS AND PERSUASSION, WHILE STILL REFLECTING SOME SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING, WOULD HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF HASTENING THE DAY WHEN URUGUAY WILL RESTORE OPENNESS AND DUE PROCESS. THIS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE WOULD REDUCE OUR LEGITIMATE CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ONCE AGAIN MAKE POSSIBLE A RESUMPTION OF COMFORTABLE, COMPATIBLE, FRIENDLY RELATIONS. WE URGENTLY NEED TO REVIEW U.S. POLICY AND DECIDE UPON OUR FUTURE COURSE. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN MY OVERVIEW STATEMENT (MVD 341) I SAID THAT IF WE CARE AT ALL ABOUT URUGUAY AND THE VALUE OF OUR TRADITIONAL RELATIONS, THE BASIC FRIENDSHIP OF ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS ALIGNMENT EVEN UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS STAUNCHLY ALONGSIDE THE UNITED STATES ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, THAT OUR MAJOR POLICY OBJECTIVE MUST BE SOMEHOW TO REVERSE THE TREND OF DETERIORATION IN OUR RELATIONS AND SEEK TO

REESTABLISH THEM ON A MORE UNDERSTANDING, CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRIENDLY BASIS. I IDENTIFIED OUR PRINCIPAL PROBLEM AS HUMAN RIGHTS. I SAID WHAT WE MUST DO AT THIS TIME IS TO TRY TO REACH AN AGREED PERCEPTION AS TO WHAT REALLY IS THE SCOPE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM HERE AND THEN A CONSENSUS AS TO WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH IT. I ALSO STRONGLY STATED MY VIEW THAT SANCTIONS WERE LIKELY TO BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND THAT WE SHOULD BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS CONTINUE PERSUASIVE, QUIET DIPLOMACY IN AN EFFORT TO INDUCE THE GOU TO CORRECT WHAT MAY BE WRONG AND TO REASSURE THE WORLD AS TO CONDITIONS HERE THROUGH A POLICY OF GREATER OPENNESS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION.

3. WE HAVE SINCE REPORTED A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS SUGGESTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY WAS AT LAST COMING TO GRIPS WITH THIS PROBLEM (PEREZ CALDAS/GIAMBRUNO POLICY REVIEW CONSULTATION), AND THAT STEPS AND DECISIONS FAVORING GREATER OPENNESS WERE AT LEAST UNDER URGENT HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATION. THROUGH OAS SECGEN ORFILA'S SOUNDINGS, WE WERE GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT WITHIN THE JUNTA DE GENERALES A MAJORITY FAVORING A MORE OPEN POLICY AND POSSIBLY LAHRC INSPECTION SEEMED TO BE DEVELOPING OVER RESISTANCE OF THE MORE HARDLINING ULTRA-NATIONALISTS. IN ALL OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THEN, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT U.S. POLICY, WE ARE TRULY INTERESTED IN USING OUR INFLUENCE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY, SHOULD HAVE BEEN ONE ADAPTED SENSITIVELY TO THE DELICACIES OF THIS KIND OF SITUATION, DESIGNED TO SUPPORT

AND ENCOURAGE THOSE HERE OF MORE FLEXIBLE PERSUASION. UNFORTUNATELY, AS VIEWED FROM HERE, OUR ACTIONS HAVE NOT REFLECTED THAT KIND OF A POLICY.

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4. RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WE MADE, WITH ALL THE CARE AND REFLEXION WHICH I AND MY PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES HERE COULD MUSTER, SEEM CONSISTENTLY TO HAVE FALLEN ON DEAF EARS IN WASHINGTON AS NO ONE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION. WE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATION THAT WE PAUSE TO REFLECT ON THE URUGUAYAN SITUATION AND DETERMINE THAT POLICY BEST CALCULATED TO IMPROVE IT; AND OUR EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MIGHT BEFORE IT WAS ABLE TO REALLY KNOW THE SITUATION BE CARRIED BY ESTABLISHED MOMENTUM INTO A SERIES OF ACTS AND COUNTERACTS WHICH COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR RELATIONS FOR YEARS TO COME HAS APPARENTLY BEEN IGNORED. THE WORSE EVIDENCE OF RIGIDITY OF PURPOSE AND INSENSITIVITY TO ARGUMENT CAME IN A MESSAGE WHICH SHOCKINGLY STATED THAT THIS EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN ASKED FOR ITS VIEW ON A VITAL ISSUE BECAUSE THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALREADY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHAT IT KNEW WE WOULD HAVE SAID HAD WE BEEN ASKED: THIS VIEW WAS VIGOROUSLY PROTESTED.

5. UPON BEING INFORMED LAST WEEK OF THE DECISION NOT TO SEEK SECURITY

ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR URUGUAY IN FY-78, I IMMEDIATELY STATED MY AGREEMENT. SINCE URUGUAY HAD NOT SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE KOCH AMENDMENT TAKEN EFFECTIVE STEPS TO CLARIFY THE PICTURE HERE AS TO HUMAN RIGHTS, IT SEEMED TO ME FOOLISH TO SEEK FUNDS WHICH IN ALL PROBABILITY WOULD BE DENIED. ALSO, TO SEEK THEM IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD HAVE BEEN HYPOCRITICALLY INCONSISTENT WITH THE ADMINISTRATION'S CLEARLY ANNOUNCED MORAL CONCERNS AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OBJECTIVES. BUT THIS REASONABLE DECISION DID NOT, IT SEEMS TO ME, JUSTIFY SPOTLIGHTING URUGUAY (TOGETHER WITH TWO OTHER COUNTRIES OF ALL POSSIBLE CANDIDATES IN THIS IMPERFECT WORLD) AS ONE WHICH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO SANCTION BY A REDUCTION IN ASSISTANCE AS A SIGN OF DISPLEASURE ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS: MORESO BECAUSE THE STATED REDUCTION ITSELF WAS NOT ACCURATE. AS A MATTER OF ACTUAL FACT, NOTHING WAS BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM URUGUAY AS MILITARY AID HAD LAST YEAR BEEN LEGISLATED TO ZERO AND PU CANNOT REDUCE ZERO. COMPOUNDING THIS ERRONEOUS PRESENTA-
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TION WAS THE FACT THAT WIRE SERVICES WRONGLY REPORTED THAT ECONOMIC AID HAD BEEN CUT AS WELL. WHILE IT WAS A GOOD THING PROMPTLY TO INFORM AMBASSADOR PEREZ CALDAS THAT THIS WAS AN ERROR AND TO INSTRUCT ME TO DO THE SAME HERE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER AND MORE FAIR HAD THE DEPARTMENT CORRECTED THE RECORD PUBLICLY. FAILURE TO DO SO ONLY ADDED TO THE GOU'S SENSE OF INJURY, GRIEVANCE, CONFUSION AND HARRASSMENT AS, WHILE NEITHER ECONOMIC NOR MILITARY AID HAD IN FACT BEEN CUT THE SUPPOSED CUTS WER NEVERTHELESS USED AS BASIS FOR PROMINENTLY ACCUSING URUGUAY AS A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATOR.

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DHA-01 ORM-01 SP-02 L-01 IO-06
PRS-01 H-01 PM-03 INR-05 EB-03 MC-01 IGA-01 /047 W
-----032303Z 011337 /70
R 021324Z MAR 77
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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 0836

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LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE TODMAN
FROM AMBASSADOR

6. ALL OF THIS HAS HAD ITS UNHAPPILY PREDICTIBLE RESULT. URUGUAY, REACTING OUT OF A SENSE OF INJURED DIGNITY AND NATIONAL PRIDE HAS ANNOUNCED ITS CANCELLATION OF ANY OUTSTANDING REQUESTS (OF WHICH THERE ARE AT THIS TIME NONE) FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID, AND ACCUSED THE U.S. OF USING AID AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL INTERVENTION. BUT WHEREAS THE EFFECT OF ITS CANCELLATION IS NIL, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT AND THE REAL EFFECT ON THE STATE OF U.S.-URUGUAYAN RELATIONS IS NOT NIL. UNHAPPILY AS WELL, FAR FROM STRENGTHENING THE HAND OF MODERATES WHO MIGHT WORK TO BETTER HUMAN RIGHTS, OUR ACTION HAS CLEARLY PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF THE HARDLINERS WHO BY NATURE HAVE A LESSER CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THE EFFECTS, I FEAR, WILL LONG BE WITH US AND, UNFORTUNATELY, URUGUAY AND URUGUAYANS WILL BE THE LONGER TERM SUFFERERS.

7. AS YOU KNOW, THIS EMBASSY HAS NEVER CLAIMED THAT URUGUAY
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IS INNOCENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AS ONLY UNKNOWING FOOLS WOULD DO THAT. BUT WE HAVE MADE AN HONEST EFFORT TO GIVE THE DEPARTMENT A TRUE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION AS BEST WE CAN DETERMINE IT, SO THAT IT WOULD HAVE AT LEAST A REASONABLY ACCURATE EVALUATION UPON WHICH TO BASE POLICY. IN SPITE OF THIS EFFORT, THE PREVAILING VIEW WHICH SEEMS TO ACCOUNT FOR U.S. POLICY IS CLEARLY THAT OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ATTACKING URUGUAY AND WHOSE VERSIONS, I BELIEVE, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY SHOWN TO INCLUDE A CONSIDERABLE MARGIN OF EXAGGERATION, DISTORTION, SELF-SERVING MOTIVATION, CARELESS PRE-SENTATION OR SIMPLE UNTRUTH. IF AFTER FILTERING ALL OF THIS OUT, THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THE REMAINING PICTURE GRIM ENOUGH TO WARRANT PRESSURE ON URUGUAY, WELL AND GOOD. BUT EVEN THEN, THIS MISSION STILL WOULD HAVE OPPOSED SANCTIONS AS AN EFFECTIVE COURSE.

8. IN VERY SHORT ORDER AMERICAN/URUGUAYAN RELATIONS HAVE PLUNGED TO A NADIR NOT BEFORE KNOWN IN A LONG HISTORY OF ENDURING FRIENDSHIP AND OF SHARED IDEALS, TRADITIONS AND INTERESTS. THAT THIS SHOULD HAPPEN WITH A COUNTRY WHOSE PEOPLE I FIND, IN ALL MY LONG EXPERIENCE IN LATIN AMERICA, TO BE MORE

COMPATIBLE WITH AMERICANS IN MORE RESPECTS THAN ANY OTHERS I HAVE KNOWN, IS PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY MUCH THAT IS WRONG WITH URUGUAYAN SOCIETY TODAY AS THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN FORCIBLY SEPARATED FROM THE PRACTICE AND ENJOYMENT OF ITS TRADITIONAL FREEDOMS AND INSTITUTIONS. TO STATE THEIR CASE, THIS IS A SEPARATION WHICH THE RULING MILITARY VIEW (WITH THE SUPPORT AND/OR RELUCTANT ACQUIESCENCE OF PROBABLY A MAJORITY OF URUGUAYANS) AS A NECESSARY PROCESS OF NATIONAL RESTORATION. THAT THE NATION WAS PREVIOUSLY CARRIED TO THE BRINK OF DISASTER BY AN UNJUSTIFIED, BRUTAL AND POINTLESS OUTBREAK OF URBAN TERRORISM IS ALSO AN UNDENIABLE FACT. AND IT IS ALSO A FACT THAT THERE WAS HERE NO TYRANNY AGAINST WHICH THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE HAD A JUST RIGHT TO REVOLT, EXCEPT POSSIBLY IF DEMOCRATIC OPENNESS PRACTICES TO THE POINT OF NEAR ANARCHY CAN ITSELF BE A FORM OF TYRANNY. THAT THE REACTION TO THIS OUTBREAK, WHATEVER ITS CAUSE OR JUSTIFICATION, HAS MILITARIZED A NON-MILITARY COUNTRY AND LED TO EXCESSES IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NAME OF NATIONAL PRESERVATION, WHICH HAVE IN TURN GIVEN RISE TO JUST CONCERN ON GROUNDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, IS ALSO AN UNDISPUTABLE FACT. THE QUESTION FOR THE UNITED STATES, IS, HOWEVER, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY MORALLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO DEAL WITH SUCH A SITUATION?

9. THE BETTER PART OF WISDOM IT SEEMS TO ME WOULD HOLD THAT A TRUE FRIEND WOULD REACT TO SUCH A SITUATION WITH SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THE URUGUAYAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN OUR FRIENDS, AS WELL AS WITH FIRMNESS AND PURPOSE NEEDED TO INFLUENCE THEIR GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE RESTORATION OF DUE PROCESS AND OPENESS. THIS, SIMPLY PUT, IS ALL THAT URUGUAY REALLY REQUIRES (AND THIS IS POSSIBLE AS THE MILITARY ARE, AFTER ALL, AS URUGUAYAN AS ANY). ONCE THIS IS PUT IN MOTION TOWARD ACCOMPLISHMENT, THERE ARE HERE LONG-ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND QUALIFIED PEOPLE, CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER TO MAKE URUGUAY AGAIN WHAT IT ONCE WAS, A TRUE MODEL OF DEMOCRACY AND OF PROGRESIVE, SOCIAL INSPIRATION AND IDEALS FOR ALL OF LATIN AMERICA. BUT IF WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW A COURSE OF PUBLIC CRITICISM AND SANCTION, INSTEAD OF UNDERSTANDING AND PERSUASION, THE LESS WILL BE OUR INFLUENCE FOR BRINGING BETTER DAYS TO ALL URUGUAYANS. U.S. INTERESTS WILL NOT SUFFER HERE BECAUSE OF THIS FOR WE HAVE NONE TO SPEAK OF AND OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN ANY DIRECT WAY INVOLVED. URUGUAYANS, HOWEVER, WILL SUFFER MORE AND LONGER THAN THEY OTHERWISE MIGHT. OUR INFLUENCE HERE CAN BE GREAT IF WE CHOOSE TO USE IT PROPERLY, AND EFFECTIVELY, FOR NO NATION IS MORE ADMIRER HERE THAN OURS. IF WE DON'T, WE WILL DEAL OURSELVES OUT AND THE URUGUAYAN DRAMA WILL PROBABLY BE PLAYED OUT ULTIMATELY AND TRAGICALLY IN GREATER REPRESSION, REACTION AND CONFLICT TOWARD WHO KNOWS WHAT ULTIMATE RESOLUTION.

10. I THINK THE TIME HAS CLEARLY COME FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO

CONDUCT THE KIND OF IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THIS SITUATION WHICH I HAVE
BEEN RECOMMENDING. I HOPE THAT IT WILL BE SCHEDULED AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE AND THAT YOU WILL ORDER ME TO WASHINGTON TO PARTICIPATE
IN IT.

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Message Attributes

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